

FORWARD! FORWARD!

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NO. 548

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON SUNDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 18, 1863,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*"And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore cry you unto me? speak unto
the children of Israel, that they go forward."
Exodus 14:15.*

SPIRITUAL men, in their distresses, turn at once to prayer, even as the stag when hunted takes to flight. Prayer is a never-failing resort, it is sure to bring a blessing with it. Even apart from the answer of our supplications, the very exercise of prayer is healthy to the man engaged in it. Far be it from me to ever say a word in disparagement of the holy, happy, heavenly exercise of prayer. But, beloved, there are times when prayer is not enough—when prayer itself is out of season. You will think that a hard saying, and say, “Who can hear it?” But my text is to the point. Moses prayed that God would deliver His people, but the Lord said to him, “Wherefore cry you unto me?” As much as to say, this is not the time for prayer, it is the time for action. “Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.” When we have prayed over a matter to a certain degree, it then becomes sinful to tarry any longer, our plain duty is to carry our desires into action, and having asked God’s guidance, and having received divine power from on high, to go at once to our duty without any longer deliberation or delay.

Brethren, a vigorous faith will often shut its eyes to difficulties. When faith looks upon a difficulty as being exceedingly great, then she turns to prayer, but, on the other hand, after having sought God’s help, and having received it, she frequently laughs at the impossibility and cries, “It shall be done,” and then, instead of betaking herself any longer to her knees, she boldly marches on, believing that the difficulty will vanish before her, that the crooked will be made straight, and the rough places plain. We are not to be always praying over a difficulty, when we have fairly committed it to God, we are to act upon the assurance that He has heard us, nor will such an action be the fruit of rashness, for it is a solid and substantial fact, that prayer does avail with God.

Beloved, it strikes me that the advice which the Lord gave to Moses, was such as He has given to the preacher tonight, and that the message which Moses delivered to the children of Israel is a very fit one for me to deliver to you. Short, prompt, soldier-like, here is the whole of it, “Forward! Forward!” If you have been sitting down or tempted to go back—“Forward!” We have long been praying, let us tonight “Go forward.” The one subject we shall take up and try to deliver to different classes of character is, “Thus says the LORD, you children of Israel, Forward!”

I. First, we will contemplate THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL AS A FLOCK OF FUGITIVES, and in this light they give encouragement to trembling sinners, flying from the curse of the law and from the power of their sins.

I think I see those poor Israelites crowding together, all alarmed and afraid, whispering to one another some such trembling words as these—“I saw them. I saw my old master on horseback riding after me. I looked, and I saw regiment upon regiment of warriors marching in long red lines.” “I heard,” says another, “the sound of their war music. I heard the clash of their spears, we cannot stand against them. We are only defenseless multitudes, and they are the well-trained sons of Mizraim, their swords will be drunk with our blood.” They huddled together as a company of doves seeking to escape the hawk. Alas! what can they do? They are crying to God, and to Moses, thinking of this plan, and devising

of the other, and Moses himself, in some sort of alarm, is crying out to God for them—"Lord, help this people, they are in great straits, they are in frightful difficulties. The enemy says, 'I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil, my lust shall be satisfied upon them.' Lord, what am I to do with this company?" Here comes the divine answer, full of wisdom and love—"Speak unto them, and bid them go forward."

Now, such is my message to the company of fugitives who are here tonight. You have been awakened, conscience has been alarmed, you have begun to feel the terrors of the law, you have heard the crack of the whip, and felt it on your back. You are trying to escape from your sins, you are not, as you used to be, a contented bondsman, but you pant to be delivered altogether from sin and its power and its guilt. You have been flying as best you could from sin, but the whole of your sins are after you, and your conscience, with its quick ear can hear the sound of threatening judgment. "Alas!" your heart is saying, "unless God helps me, I shall be in hell." "Alas!" says your judgment, "unless God is merciful, I shall soon perish!" Every power of your manhood is now upon the alarm, the different parts of your heart are talking to one another, and they are all foreboding desperate mischief.

Now, what shall I do for you? Shall I pray for you? Ay, that I will. Shall I bid *you* pray? Ay, that I may, and we may blend our prayers together—"God be merciful to us sinners! Lord save us, or we perish!" But I think, while I am praying for you, I hear my Master saying, "Wherefore cry you unto me? Tell them to go forward, preach Christ to them instead of praying any longer, or bidding *them* pray. Deliver to them the message of the Gospel—'Forward, sinner, forward to the cross! Forward to the five wounds! Forward to the bloody sweat and to the crown of thorns! Go forward to the agonies of Gethsemane, and to the death struggles of Golgotha.' Forward! Forward to the place—

*'Where the full atonement's made,
Where the utmost ransom's paid.'*"

I know what you say. "Right before me rolls the great sea of God's wrath. I am surrounded with a dark, dark night, and I see no light but the sheen of these terrible waves of fire. If I go forward, God's eternal wrath is in the way." Forward, sinner, whatever may obstruct the way, let not hell itself block up the road, for do you not know that when Jesus is your leader, He will at once divide the Red Sea of JEHOVAH'S wrath? He *did* divide it, He went through it Himself when He suffered the wrath of God instead of you.

As you go forward, you shall find Almighty justice standing up as a protecting wall on either hand, and no longer rolling as a devouring flood. Forward in the way of faith, in the Savior's name, and when you have passed through the dry bed of a sea, once deep and stormy, you shall look back and see the deep sea swallowing up your sins, and shall sing, "The depths have covered them, there is not one of them left." Forward, sinner, forward!

"Well," says one, "I will pray about it." Beware of substituting prayer for faith, faith is your present duty, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved." "I will think about it a little longer." Do no such thing, thinking is a very poor substitute for believing. Forward! forward, at once and on the spot, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved." "But I am not fit to believe." Forward, in God's name—forward! What have you to do with fitness? God commands you to believe in His Son Jesus Christ.

Forward, is my message—I come not here to tamper with you, to deal with your "ifs" and "buts," and excuses, and peradventures. Hell is behind you, you are shut up on the right hand and on the left by God's providence, your own fears, and divine justice, there is but one way of safety and that is the way of faith. Forward, sinner! "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved."

Why, some of you have been frittering away your time, weeks, and months, and years, thinking about it, praying about it, reading about it, hoping about it, fearing about it, but never coming to Jesus just as you are. It is all wrong—it is all wrong. God's command is neither work, nor feel, nor fear, but it

is simple and plain. Believe! Forward! Trust a Savior's wounds, and trusting there, there is life in a look at Him, and you are saved.

O, I wish I could get behind some of you and whisper a word in your ear, for I know what Satan says. He says, "Tarry, tarry, tarry!" Ah! he loves to have you in the place of breaking forth as children, that he may vex and torment you. "Go back," says he, "go back!" Ah, I know he would like to have you at your cups again, and in your old sins, but you cannot go back if God has once brought you out of Egypt. I know what he whispers. He says, "It is of no use going forward. If you believe in Jesus," says he, "you will perish after all." Back, you old liar, back! God never did permit a man yet to walk in a path in which He commanded him to go and not to walk safely.

Forward, sinner, forward! Christ is before you, and heaven in Him is before you. If you stay where you are, you shall die. If you go forward, you can but die, and therefore, take the captain's word tonight, for it is the word of the captain's King—"Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward."

II. Secondly, we may view the great company who came out of Egypt as AN ARMY UNDER COMMAND, therefore, they must obey. The command given to them is, "Forward!"

"Forward? Forward?" might the wise men have said in the host of Israel, "How can we go forward? That narrow shingle beach leads down to the foaming billow. Forward! what do you mean? We are altogether as dead men if we go forward. Would you have us swim? Do you know what you at? There are miles and miles of deep water, and who knows the bottom of the sea? Forward? Absurd—we shall lose the camels, and the sheep, and the baggage, and our wealth, and our children, and our little ones, yea, and our own lives also." But thus says the Lord, "Forward!" You came out of Egypt under Moses' command, will you play the rebel's part? If the Lord be your Captain, you must do absolutely what He bids you at any loss and at any cost. If *He* says, "Forward," and it is into the Red Sea or into a gulf of fire, forward you must go.

Now, beloved, this presents us a picture of those who are savingly converted, who, on a sudden, meet with difficulties in following Christ, and run to their minister or to their friend, and say, "What are we to do?" The Lord's message by me tonight to your anxious inquiry is this—"Forward!" It is a simple one—"Forward!" "Sir, I have begun to be a Christian, but if I continue in it, I shall lose my business. My calling is such that I cannot be honest in it, and serve my God faithfully without sinking all my capital, and bringing myself and family to beggary. What ought I to do? Ought I not to give up my religion?" Forward! Forward! no matter what is before you. Forward! you are not fit to be a soldier of Christ unless you can count all costs, and still hold fast to the cross of Christ.

"Ah!" says one, "but what is to become of my children, my family, my household?" Friend, *I* cannot tell you, but *God* can. It is yours to trust them with Him, for the only command I have for you is, "Forward! Forward!" "But my husband says I shall never come into the house again, my father tells me he will turn me out of doors." Be it so, no one pities you more than I do, but I dare not alter my message to your soul! I am to bid you, "Go forward!"

"Well," says one, "these are hard commands." Yes, but the martyrs had harder still. There was the stake, the gallows, the rack, they must rot in prison, they must be dragged at the heels of wild horses, but what is the command? "Forward." On went the goodly host through floods, through fires, through seas of blood, they never paused, and if you would be worthy followers of them, you must do the same. The Master's message to you is, "Forward!"

At the famous charge of Balaclava, when the order was given to charge the batteries, what could that troop do but ride into the valley of death? There they go! on, on, up to the very cannons' mouths! The word of command must not be questioned but obeyed—

*"Theirs not to make reply;
Theirs not to reason why;
Theirs but to do and die—
Into the valley of death"*

Rode the six hundred."

And you, if you are fit to be God's soldiers—if you are really His, and filled with His Holy Spirit—you must do the same. What would you think of our soldiers, if, when they were bidden to charge, they should say, "There is a ditch in the way." Jump in it. "But there are soldiers in the way." Cut them to pieces." "But they have very sharp fixed bayonets." "Fix yours too, push them at the bayonet's point, and drive them back. England expects every man to do his duty." What God commands must surely have a higher claim on men than what England commands them to do. Comrades in arms, all my message to you is, "Forward! Forward!" If God has called you to honor, and glory, and immortality and eternal life—if loss of business, comfort, honor, fame, friends—relatives should threaten you, you must not be daunted, for he who loves any of these more than Christ is not worthy of Him.

There are cowards of another sort with whom I must have a word. They do not like going forward, they would not lose by it if they did, but they feel a quivering sensation of nervousness come over them, and though they know their Master's commands, yet they say, "Well, I must think the matter over." Now suppose one instance—and I take only one of the sort—suppose you know it (as it certainly is, whether you know it or not), to be your duty to be baptized—how often I have heard people say, "Well, yes, the Lord is my gracious Master, and I am His servant, and I believe it is the duty of believers to be baptized, but if the Lord ever reveals it to me, then I will do it." There is a soldier for you! He is not content to get the same orders as his fellow soldiers, but he cries, "When the regiment is on the march, if the captain will come round to my tent and talk to me by myself, I will not mind going." Why, he deserves to be flogged for a deserter. I will not wish anything hard to my Christian brother, but I do venture to prophesy that he will be beaten with many stripes if he talks in that way. "Ah," says one, "but the Lord must apply it to me." What for? The thing is clear enough without its being applied. If there is anything in the Bible which is plain at all, it is that he who believes in Christ should be buried with Him in baptism. Then, if it is your clear duty, you ought to do it at once.

"Well, I will pray about it." And do you believe God will hear such a wicked prayer as that? If I tell my child that there is something for him to do, and he tells me, "Well, I will think about it," I shall let him know that I am not to be thus impudently trifled with. If I say to him, "Now, my child, do so-and-so." "Father, I will pray about it." I shall not put up with such hypocritical rebellion, it will not do in one's own house, much less in the house of God. Are you to be permitted to trifle with positive precepts, and then to lay your sin upon God's back? I do not think so.

Dear brother, if you have been sitting down timidly and saying, "Well, one of these days I will come out and own my Lord," instead of that, I am bid to command you on this point and on every other, if it is a plain duty, whether it is pleasant to the flesh or not, "Forward! Forward! Forward!" What are your marching orders? Does your Lord tell you to do it? Do it. Do the Scriptures bid you? Do it. It is not yours to reason why, any more than it is the soldier's, but as the seed of Israel marched right on, even though the sea was in their way, so must you, though death itself should be the result. "Speak to the children of Israel, that they go forward."

III. We will change the topic once again, and we will take a third view of it. Let us view these people as ON THE MARCH TOWARDS CANAAN. Many of you are on your way towards heaven, and the Lord's command to you is, "Forward! Forward!"

I would that I could sound that one word in the ears of many whom I believe to be the Lord's people, but who have for a long time settled upon their lees. There are some persons who cannot be persuaded to make an advance in the divine life. The moment you urge them to anything practical, they call you legal. They seem to consider themselves as inanimate clay ordained to lie passively in the hands of the Holy Spirit, but they forget that the Holy Spirit works in us, not to be idle and powerless, but to *will*, and to *do*, of God's good pleasure. They neither *will* nor *do*, but talk about the Spirit as though He were to will and to do everything for them. To such who have been converted but have made no progress, let me in my Master's name, give clear utterance to that word, "Forward."

Brethren, you and I ought to go forward *in knowledge*. If I know no more of Scripture than I did ten years ago, what have I done with my time? If I am no better instructed myself as a scribe in my Master's kingdom, of what use shall I be to others? If you have been in this world these years, and yet doctrine has not become more clear, nor experience more plain, it is time you should look about you, and follow on to know the Lord. We do not keep boys at school year after year, if they make no progress, and yet how many there are of professing Christians who seem to have been stunted in their early profession, so that they positively have not advanced in knowledge one iota beyond where they were ten or twenty years ago. In this point, however, they are not so much to blame as in others. "Forward," should be the motto as to *our faith*. You were doubting and fearing twenty years ago. If I recollect, when I was but a lad ten years ago, I heard you lament—

*'Tis a point I long to know,
Oft it causes anxious thought.'*

Have you not a better time than that now? Can you not sing—

*"A debtor to mercy alone,
Of covenant mercy I sing;
Nor fear with Thy righteousness on,
My person and offerings to bring:
The terrors of law and of God,
With me can have nothing to do;
My Savior's obedience and blood
Hide all my transgressions from view.*

I do not suppose you will altogether be rid of fears, but I do think your motto should be—"Forward!" that your faith should become more constant, and your doubts less frequent. Surely the venerable saint, who has proved his Master one hundred times, ought to find his faith more strong than those of us who are but babes in the family! Ought we to be always limping, always hoping and trusting, doubting and fearing? Is it not time for us to use the strong muscles of the fully developed man—and, leaving all nursery strollers, ought we not to stand upright with Abraham, with a faith which staggers not because of unbelief? Forward, Christian, forward as to your faith.

May I not use the same word in reference to *our fellowship with Christ*? I am afraid most of us make no progress as to nearness to Christ. Some of us, I am afraid, go back. We said, years ago, "Nearer, my God, to Thee, nearer to Thee." Are we nearer? Have we come closer to the wounds of Jesus? Do we more frequently recline upon His bosom and sit at His feet? If not, I may say with Moses, "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward."

Above all, have we made any progress as to *work for our Master*? Some, as they grow old, give up their work. I do not understand it. I must confess an inability of comprehending how any man who once preached the gospel can ever leave his ministry while his strength lasts. If the Master has once allotted you a field of labor, unless it be sheer inability, I cannot understand how you can ever cease to till the ground, or reap the sheaves. No, you will, if God has called you, want to do more, and more, and more for Jesus. You will feel a growing thirst after precious souls, at least, you ought to do so. You will be moved with greater yearnings of your bowels towards your fellow immortals, and a higher zeal for the spread of your Master's kingdom.

Christian men, when I think of some of you who have tasted that He is gracious, and are content with the taste—who have been into the river of Jesus' love until you are up to the ankles, but are loath to wade into the deeper parts of the heavenly stream, when I think of some of you who are worshipping in the outer courts, and have no ambition to enter into that which is within the veil, when I remember how some of you seem never to comprehend the resurrection life, nor what it is to be raised up together to sit

in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, I do marvel at you that you thus stand back, and in the name of God, whose servant I am, I give you this motto—"Forward! Forward!" Press onward in the divine life, forget the road already trod, and onward urge your way. Cry for the Spirit of God, ask for more unction, more power, more consciousness of the divine indwelling, and then take for the motto on your banner—"Forward! Forward! Forward!"

IV. In the fourth place, but with very great brevity, TO CHRISTIANS IN TROUBLE our text is applicable.

The children of Israel were in great straits, they were in a trial into which God had brought them, and it is an absolute certainty, that if God brings you in, He will bring you out. He never did take a saint where he must of necessity perish. The rocks of daily life rise on the right and on the left, the raging foemen are behind, the equally raging sea is before. What is to be done now? God's Word is—"Forward!" God shall fight for you, and you shall hold your peace.

In this vast assembly, there may be several Christians who said to themselves last Saturday night, "I will go up to the house of God and inquire at the hand of the man of God what the Lord will do for me." This is the answer to your inquiry. You cannot help yourself—that is clear. Your trouble is none of your own finding—that you know, and your escape will not be of your own working—that you know also. You have nothing now to do but to cast yourselves upon your God, and go forward.

Beloved, it is a blessed thing to be absolutely stripped of creature, that you may be wholly clothed upon with the Creator. It is not pleasing to flesh and blood to be brought down to abject nothingness, but faith never is more happy than when the strength of the mortal is altogether dead, because then the immortal God comes in and clothes our weakness with His omnipotence. If I might have any choice between having abundant wealth, or being brought to absolute dependence upon daily supplies, if, in the latter case, I could have greater power to exhibit and to exert faith in Christ, I must confess that I should prefer the mode of living which would give me most room to enjoy the luxury of depending upon my God. I believe it is more happy and more divine a life to live from hand to mouth, dependent upon the providence of God, and having the confidence to trust Him, than it is to have all the abundance of this world, but to have nothing about which faith may exercise itself. Often when our joys are thick about us, and we have ten thousand creature comforts, we are then naked, and poor, and miserable in spirituals, but when the creature comforts fall as the leaves are falling from the trees in autumn, then it is that we have frequently the most joy and the most peace in God.

"Give me back my sickbed," said a saint, when he remembered what joy he had had upon it. Theodoret, the martyr, said that his persecutors had done him an injury when they took him off the rack. "For," said he, "while I was on the rack, God sent His angels to comfort me, and now you have taken me off, I am afraid I shall lose their heavenly presence." Experientially I have learned, dear friends, that at the Red Sea of affliction we see most of the right arm of God. I am glad there was a Red Sea, I bless God that it had deep and foaming billows, I praise His name that there were fierce and cruel Egyptians, for if there had never been that Red Sea, never would the song of Moses, and the shout of Miriam have been heard—"Sing you to the LORD, for He has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea." Your tribulations will yet yield you music. All you have now to do, is to honor God by going forward. Hold your peace, and God shall fight for you! "Be still, and know that I am God." When the worst has come to the worst, that God—

*"Who moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform,
Will plant His footsteps in the sea,
And ride upon the storm."*

"Forward! Christian, forward!"

V. Let me not weary you, but I must yet again use my text in another manner, for the exhortation of all of you who are followers of my Lord and Master. THE ISRAELITES WERE UPON A DIVINE MISSION.

They were going up to slay the Canaanites. Hivite, and Jebusite, and Hittite must all be slain with the sharp sword of Israel, but a difficulty rolls between them and their prey! The message, however, of God's captain, is still "Forward! Forward!"

My brethren, let me specially address you who are associated in church fellowship here. Some of you will remember when I came up from the country. I remember better than you do, for I have hidden these things in my heart, a child, almost a babe, I came into your place of worship which was half empty, nay, not one-sixth full. You may, some of you, remember that sermon, when the youth preached of the faithfulness of God, and tried to magnify divine immutability. I believe the note of the charge that morning, was, "Forward!" Hope was kindled in the breasts of many, the few who were there faithful to the cause, hoped and believed that God had better days for them, and we took heart.

You will remember, some of you, when the people began to throng the aisles, within three or four Sabbaths, when the place was full, our cry was "Forward!" then. We had more prayer meetings, more earnestness every day, I recollect, and it was thought a strange thing to see such zeal. Then, we wanted to enlarge the chapel, and one Sabbath evening, preaching from that text—"By faith the walls of Jericho fell down," when certain ones had objected to any alteration because it was a mere spasm, a mere excitement, the young lad from the country would soon be forgotten, I said concerning that wall at the back, "By faith this wall will fall down," for our motto was "Forward!" We held a little meeting, raised the money at once, down went the wall, the place was enlarged.

The enlargement was of no use, our motto was, "Forward!" God opened the doors of Exeter Hall to us, we went there, the place was crowded, multitudes of souls were converted, the church increased, did we stop? Our motto was "Forward!" The Surrey Hall was proposed to us, a larger structure, we went about it, and we said, "This is too immense a place, too bold a venture." I thought in my own mind, "The place will never be filled." You remember we still dared it, for our motto was "Forward!" Then came a crushing blow, a terrible disaster which seemed to shatter us all, and most of all, the man who was called to take the brunt of the battle. He was laid upon the ground, all broken-hearted and wretched by the catastrophe, but God allowed him not to lose heart, he rose from the dust of despondency, the Spirit of the Lord was upon him, his cry was "Forward!" and once again he stood among you, and again the thousands gathered, and on, on, on, from that time, "Forward!" has been the cry.

"We will build a Tabernacle," said we. Thirty thousand pounds! we stood back—where would it come from? "The silver and the gold are mine," was the promise of God. Some bold hearts went on, for our motto was "Forward!" and we prayed, and worked, and believed, and lo! we entered this spacious house without a debt, and we worship in it, remembering that of our own we gave unto God, and that this goodly structure is a proof of the power of faith. Our motto was still "Forward!" The pastor took one or two young men to educate. He soon had a dozen, he asked your help, you helped him, he had a score. Some said it was too many, he had forty, ere long fifty, now seventy, and still the cry is "Forward! Forward!"

What I want to do tonight to you, is just to stir your souls with a little of the old enthusiasm, to scatter among you some coals of that holy fire which once set you a blaze. "Forward! Forward!" is what we want. Brethren, we need to be doing more for Christ. Compared with our congregation, I believe we are doing much, but still not what we might do, not what we ought to do. Here is this great city, teeming with its multitudes, and the proportion of evangelistic work which we take is far too small, "Forward! Forward!"

Just at this time we have men ready to preach the Word, but we do not know where to find the room for them. There are rich men in this congregation, and men in middling circumstances who might take a little room, and pay the rent, and let some young man come and preach in it, and try to raise a church in a destitute neighborhood. Some of you might cry, "Forward!" and do that. Others of you in the

providence of God, live in poor neighborhoods, and you may have a room which holds twenty, perhaps. Could you not let some one preach in it? Preaching is the great weapon of God for pulling down strongholds, it will pull down the largest blocks of stone the enemy can pile together. Preach the Gospel, the gates of hell shake, preach the Gospel, prodigals return, preach the Gospel to every creature, it is the Master's mandate, and it is the Master's power—"The power of God unto salvation unto every one that believes."

I would I could make every member of this church feel in earnest about doing good. Do you not long to win souls? Do you not desire to spend and to be spent for your Master? I will venture to say that if you do not, you are not worthy of membership with such a church as this. If no divine zeal stirs you, if no heavenly fire has fallen on your soul, you might find a more congenial place of rest among some dull and sluggish people who care not for God.

As for my own soul, God knows how I yearn over souls—I work, and if there be any man living who can work more for God than I do, I envy him his strength and endurance. It is not twelve, nor thirteen, nor fourteen, or fifteen hours a day, which will satisfy me in the service of my Master, I wish I could be cut in pieces to preach His Gospel, and that every drop of blood might tell it to my perishing fellow men. As I cannot do that, I do love to see my young men preaching the Word of God. They are so many new mouths for me, so many tongues for some of you who have no power of speech for your Master, they speak for you, if you have a share in their maintenance. But, oh! what I can do seems to be nothing but contributing a drop, but taking out a cupful from the great sea of the world's sorrow and the world's sin. Do help me, do help me, I pray you.

Brethren, pray for us, if you can do nothing else, pray that the Spirit of God may rest upon us in our preaching and in our efforts to extend His kingdom, and may every one of you take a hand in this good work. I would sooner have half of you, and have you all alive and earnest, than have the whole of you and have some of you a drag upon the wheels. If this church does not serve God—mark these words, I speak, I think, prophetically, God will make this house a hissing, and write "Ichabod" upon these walls.

Never was a church more favored than you have been. More than two hundred years God has given you a succession of faithful pastors. We have each of us, in our lot striven to do our work, we have stood upon the walls of Zion, and those who have gone before, at least, have not been found unfaithful, and as God helps me, neither will I be unfaithful either to God's truth, or to the souls of men. But if with such appliances, with such preaching of the Gospel, and helped so marvelously, and so many of you great sinners saved from great sins, having had much forgiven—if you do not love much and serve much, O my God, let me not live to see the curse fall upon this church, but at least in my day let the blessing still continue, ay, and when this head sleeps among the clods of the valley, find them better men than we are to preach the Word, and let this church still be a star in Your right hand to shine amidst the thick darkness of the world.

Dear friends, if you are not in earnest about this, I am. Oh! we must not let this opportunity pass. There is much which you can do. I want you to help the heathen world, but I want you to begin with caring for this great heathen world of London, and if you can do nothing else, at least give us your prayers.

VI. I have done when I shall say that soon you and I will stand on the brink of Jordan's river, the deep sea of death will roll before us, trusting in Jesus, washed in His blood, hoping in His mercy, we shall not fear the last solemn hour. We shall hear the angel say, "Forward!" we shall touch the chilly stream with our feet, the flood shall fly, and we shall go through the stream dry-shod. If the flood gathers, and the Jordan overflows its banks, still the divine watchword, "Forward!" shall speed us on, and we will enter heaven's gates among the blood-washed throng, and sing unto Him who has enabled us to triumph gloriously in obedience to that command, "Forward! Forward!" God help you to go forward, and unto Him be praise forever and ever.

Taken from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.